



# Commercial Loading Zone Policy (Draft)

The right to establish and maintain a commercial loading zone is conferred to the Director of the District Department of Transportation through the District Department of Transportation Establishment Act of 2002, and is exercised through the Policy, Planning and Sustainability Administration of the agency. Specifically, Title 18, Section 24-02 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations authorizes the Director “to establish loading zones for use of commercial vehicles in any area which is zoned as a commercial or industrial district, or in front of property used as a commercial property under a nonconforming use, or at the usual shipping entrance of a large hotel or apartment building.” Accordingly, the District Department of Transportation seeks to ensure that the establishment and management of commercial loading zones city-wide is conducted according to principles that (1) encourage off-street freight deliveries; (2) adopt loading zone management strategies that are purposed to mitigate congestion and improve air quality; (3) promote loading zone management strategies to support freight efficiencies; and (4) achieve a balanced approach to the allocation of curbside space.

In accordance with these principles, DDOT establishes policies to be used for determining where each loading zone will be placed; the hours and days of the calendar week when each loading zone will be in service for the loading and unloading of freight vehicles; and the physical space that will be allocated to each loading zone. These policies are based on the four guiding principles stated in the previous paragraph, and will ensure that the strategies employed to establish and manage loading zones support the priorities of the entire District of Columbia, and are not biased in favor of, or against, any constituency. The policies for establishing and managing curbside loading zones are set forth in the following paragraphs:

## **1. Encourage off-street freight deliveries**

The District Department of Transportation encourages the off-street loading and unloading of freight in four (4) ways. Firstly, the District ensures that planned urban developments include physical accommodations for off-street freight loading activity. Secondly, the district seeks to maximize the usage of existing off-street infrastructure - such as alleyways and loading docks - as an alternative to commercial loading zones. Thirdly, the district encourages building owners and managers to lease excess off-street loading capacity to adjacent businesses. Fourthly and finally, the district encourages the introduction of innovative practices to reduce the frequency of curbside deliveries.

## **2. Mitigate congestion and improve air quality**

Pursuant to, and in accordance with, the Clean Air Act of 1970, and the 1990 Amendments thereto, the District Department of Transportation takes affirmative steps to mitigate traffic congestion and consequently improve air quality within the District Columbia. The scientifically proven correlation between congestion and air pollution is at the basis of this policy, and supports DDOT’s position that improving the flow of traffic at the site of commercial loading zones will help to improve air quality in the district. Some types of traffic activity around commercial loading zones that tend to lead to congestion and air pollution are the double parking of freight trucks, the occupancy of commercial loading zones by non-commercial vehicles (that leads to the aforementioned double parking), the undue



occupancy of commercial loading zones by trucks that are not in the process of loading or unloading, the extended waiting and idling of trucks that are consequently unable to access the zone, and the blocking of traffic lanes by trucks that are improperly positioned in commercial loading zones.

As a matter of policy, the District Department of Transportation mitigates congestion and improves air quality by adopting strategies that reduce the occurrence of double-parking by freight vehicles; that reduce the length of time that freight trucks idle; that reduce the length of time that freight trucks must wait to get access to commercial loading zones; that encourage off-peak<sup>1</sup> delivery of freight; that promote efficient use of curbside loading space through adaptive pricing mechanisms; that encourage use of non-combination, straight trucks under forty (40) feet in total length; and that encourages the sharing of information to facilitate efficient routing to commercial loading zones. In addition to these strategies characterized above, the District Department of Transportation actively seeks out funding sources for transportation projects that promote the mitigation of congestion and the improvement of air quality, as well as funding sources that support research in this area.

### **3. Promote commercial loading zone management strategies to support freight efficiencies**

The District Department of Transportation promotes commercial loading zone management strategies to support operational efficiency on the part of freight carriers. To such effect, the agency encourages shippers of freight to use shared loading facilities (such as third party freight consolidators); and incentivizes businesses to use curbside space in a way that considers the loading needs of adjacent businesses and their patrons. The District Department of Transportation also identifies and pursues funding sources that support freight-related transportation projects – that are, in turn, conducive to industry-oriented freight efficiencies; encourages efficient asset utilization to reduce the frequency of trips made per given cubic measure of freight; and shares information with freight partners that encourage operational efficiency in the loading and unloading of freight.

### **4. Achieve a balanced approach to the allocation of curbside space**

The District Department of Transportation serves the transportation needs of an entire city. Thus, in its allocation of curbside space, it must consider the needs of various co-constituencies, each of which requires a different share of the city's curbside space. Accordingly, the agency must ensure that it takes a balanced approach to the allocation of curbside space, and that the establishment and elimination of commercial loading zones is conducted in a way that considers the interests and priorities of all constituents. To achieve this balance, the District Department of Transportation abides by a policy to ensure that the district has adequate curbside loading capacity to meet demand, to reduce loading and unloading times by encouraging more efficient use of commercial loading zone space, to ensure that the allocation of curbside space is consistent with immediately adjacent land use, to integrate commercial loading zone into the prioritization of competing uses of curbside space, and to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation to reduce curbside use conflicts.

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<sup>1</sup> Off Peak, for purposes of this document is defined as weekdays and Saturdays, 8:00pm-06:00 am; and all day on Sundays.



Enforcement of these policies shall be the purview of the Policy, Planning and Sustainability Administration of the District Department of Transportation, and shall be conducted in conjunction with several of the district's law enforcement agencies, including the Metropolitan Police Department and the Department of Public Works. The District Department of Transportation may use several strategies simultaneously to ensure that commercial loading zones are used according to the principles and policies stated above, and does not enforce commercial loading zone-related violations in a manner that purposefully favors or disadvantages any constituency.